



# FEMA

## *History Not Repeated at State Park Elevation Protects Cabins From Damage*

**Gulf Shores, AL** - Park Superintendent Hugh Branyon remembers the horrible aftermath Hurricane Frederic had on the Gulf State Park lakeside cabins in 1979. All the cabins were destroyed leaving only their chimneys behind. During Hurricane Ivan on Sept. 16, 2004, however, the rebuilt cabins did not repeat history. Only one of the 17 cabins was destroyed. The drastic difference was the result of the cabins being elevated above tidal surge and flood levels.

After Hurricane Frederic, the cabins were rebuilt to the same size along Lake Shelby with Federal assistance. However, this time they were elevated over 12 feet instead of the previous 3 feet.

Hurricane Ivan struck the Gulf State Park on Sept. 15, 2004, with winds over 120 miles per hour and a tidal surge over nine feet. Beyond minor roof damage and one damaged AC unit, 16 of the 17 cabins escaped significant damages. High water marks at Cabin 6 indicated the water had reached 10.5 feet. If the cabins had not been elevated over 12 feet, they would have been catastrophically damaged by the floodwaters. The estimated replacement cost for each cabin is over \$150,000.

The survival of the cabins is significant beyond the reduced damage costs to the park and State of Alabama. The cabins are a popular park attraction, which generate year-round revenue from the cabin rentals to support the park and provide employment for eight staff members. Because the cabins had only limited damage, rental operations are expected to resume approximately eight weeks after Hurricane Ivan. A remarkable reduction compared to the three years the cabins were not available for rental while being rebuilt after Hurricane Frederic.



**Baldwin County,  
Alabama**



### **Quick Facts**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**Amount Not Available**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Elevation, Structural**

Primary Funding:

**Other FEMA funds/ US Department of  
Homeland Security**